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But it has certain excellent qualities and contains many passages which are stimulating to the specialist in colonial affairs and which deserve careful reading by any student of recent history. For example, there is the keen analysis of the conflict between a seventeenth-century civilization on an alien soil with modern industrial capitalism at work in a new country. It is open to doubt whether the author, who has tried to be conspicuously non-partizan, is quite fair in his condemnation of Boer traditions and characteristics as shown in the Transvaal. But he makes a suggestive distinction between the South African Republic and the Orange Free State. The former was always a frontier state. It drew the more restless and reckless Dutch; and these because of their situation and their history had to face two of the most difficult of administrative problems. On their borders, indeed all about them, was a vast native population, and later, surging in upon them from the ends of the world, came the miners and foreign corporations. On the other hand the position of the Orange Free State had been in the main long fixed and its political and economic atmosphere was much more calm. Other equally important matters appear in many parts of the book and commend anew the whole field of South African history to the attention of men with varied historical interests.

ALFRED L. P. DENNIS.

BOOKS OF AMERICAN HISTORY

The Riverside History of the United States. WILLIAM E. DODD, Editor. I. *Beginnings of the American People.* By CARL LOTUS BECKER. II. *Union and Democracy.* By ALLEN JOHNSON. III. *Expansion and Conflict.* By WILLIAM E. DODD. IV. *The New Nation.* By FREDERIC L. PAXSON. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. 1915. Pp. 279, xviii; 346, xvii; 329, xxiv; 342, xiv.)

TECHNICALLY, the four volumes of this attractive and handy series are of about equal size, but the number of pages of text varies from about 275 in volume I. to 346 in volume II. Each of the last three volumes, again, is divided into from sixteen to twenty chapters, while Professor Becker groups in six long chapters the material of volume I. To each chapter, throughout the series, is appended a brief bibliography of primary and secondary material, forming as a whole a discriminating selection of authorities best worth while. Professor Becker adds a brief general bibliography of the period, but this useful feature is omitted in the other volumes. Each volume is separately indexed, but there is no consolidated index to the series. There are numerous maps in black and white, most of them, apparently, drawn for this work, and embodying a good deal of well-directed labor. The maps are so small, however, and the mechanical execution as a whole so inferior, that it is not easy to use them without a glass.

The number of pages or chapters which an author or editor allots to particular topics or periods is not, in and of itself, a very satisfactory test of an historical work; but it is one test, and the application of it in this instance yields some interesting comparisons. Professor Becker, for example, whose 275 pages take us to the close of the Revolution, gives 124 pages to the periods of discovery, exploration, and the planting of the permanent English settlements; 41 pages to an account of social, economic, political, and religious conditions in America in the eighteenth century; and 73 pages to the Revolution, two-thirds of that number dealing with the decade and a half before the outbreak of hostilities. As factors in colonial history, in other words, the Revolution as a whole counts for about one-fourth and the Revolutionary War itself for about one-twelfth. Professor Johnson, who in 346 pages carries on the story to 1829, gives to the work of the Federal Convention about the same amount of space that he gives to the "critical period", spends 122 pages in getting from 1789 to 1801 and 74 pages in describing the Jeffersonian régime, disposes of the War of 1812 in eighteen pages and of its results in fourteen, and allots 100 pages to the last fifteen years of his period: on the whole a well-balanced division. Professor Dodd, with 329 pages for the period from 1829 to 1865, allows 14 pages for the Mexican War, and 59 pages, or a trifle less than one-sixth of the volume, to the Civil War; while Professor Paxson assigns to the War with Spain only a little less space than Professor Johnson gives to the War of 1812. Whatever the advocates of peace may think of this series in other respects, they certainly cannot complain that military events have been over-emphasized; while secondary school-teachers who have been asking for a subordination of the colonial period and a fuller treatment of the period since the Civil War may be interested to observe that each of these periods receives one volume out of the four.

While the volumes fit together well, and unnecessary overlapping is conspicuous by its absence, the several volumes have somewhat striking individuality in both style and treatment. Professor Becker, whose literary form has rare charm, is at special pains to exhibit the European background, not only of the age of discovery, but of the entire colonial period as well; and no American writer working in such confined quarters has, I think, achieved this particular task so well. Whether, on the other hand, he has not given us a brilliant piece of interpretation rather than a sufficiently solid narrative, is another question. Such passages, for example, as the discussion of the middle-class aspects of the Protestant Reformation (p. 81 *et seq.*), and the later dissection of the spirit of Puritanism (p. 114 *et seq.*), are both broad and penetrating, as is the presentation of the larger causes of the Revolution; but for such courses in American colonial history as are commonly taught in colleges the volume could hardly serve as a sufficient text-book, notwithstanding the fact that every student in such courses would do well to read the book.

After all is said and done, however, a writer who attempts a summary account of the colonial period is entitled to a great deal of latitude, for the period has little inherent unity until the Revolution is reached. After 1783 the material is more tractable, and Professor Johnson's narrative is at once orderly, systematic, and balanced. To say that there is less novelty here than in the other volumes of the series is only to recognize that the early constitutional period, rather more than any other, fixes its own outlines, and that a writer is largely restrained to the selection of that which is most important and typical. Professor Johnson has certainly done this with skill. A good example of condensed wisdom appears in his brief comment upon the significance of the Kentucky and Virginia Resolutions (p. 111), where he points out that protest, rather than action, was chiefly in mind, and that emphasis upon nullification, interposition, or the compact theory as the main contention is misplaced. On the other hand, while the bibliographical note to chapter IV. points out that the attitude of scholars towards some of the topics dealt with in the chapter—the Genet episode, the Jay treaty, etc.—has been changed by the publication of certain of Professor Turner's studies, the brevity of the text has apparently precluded any marked change in the accustomed presentation.

Professor Dodd, the editor of the series, is at his best in interpreting the economic and state influences which affected national development after 1829 in both the South and the West; and although he minimizes unduly the effect of the abolition movement and the Fugitive Slave Law, he somewhat offsets this by a fresh presentation of the economic background of the Kansas-Nebraska Act and the special interest of the Northwest in that legislative programme. There is also an interesting chapter of apology for Van Buren. Professor Paxson, who treats of the period subsequent to the Civil War, has the most difficult task of all. I do not see how such a thesis as he propounds in his preface, namely, that the new nation which has appeared since the Civil War "has been only accidentally connected with that catastrophe", can be maintained, and his well-written pages are in fact a refutation of it; still, a book is not necessarily built around its preface. The narrative of events is brought down to 1914.

Viewed as a whole, the series has certain marked characteristics. In its treatment of the colonial period its standpoint, as has been said, is England rather than the colonies; and while no attempt is made to create the impression of a colonial system more perfect than actually existed, it is imperial rather than provincial significance that is emphasized. In its treatment of the Revolution, social and constitutional influences predominate over military happenings. In the period subsequent to 1789, on the other hand, constitutional questions are greatly subordinated and economic considerations are brought to the fore, while an unusual amount of space is given to state politics. More, too, than in any other comprehensive history of equal bulk, the history of the nation

is interpreted in terms of the West and the South, rather than in those of New England and the Atlantic seaboard. The course of international relations and the development of American foreign policy are, in general, only briefly discussed. The volumes by Professor Becker and Professor Dodd strike out new lines, and may fairly be regarded as substantive contributions. The series as a whole is a distinct enrichment of the resources of the college teacher, and ought to find a useful place in school and public libraries.

WILLIAM MACDONALD.

The Review of American Colonial Legislation by the King in Council. By ELMER BEECHER RUSSELL, Ph.D. [Studies in History, Economics, and Public Law, edited by the Faculty of Political Science of Columbia University, vol. LXIV., no. 2.] (New York: Longmans, Green, and Company. 1915. Pp. 227.)

DR. RUSSELL'S intensive monograph and Professor Andrews's brief article on "The Royal Disallowance" (reprint, American Antiquarian Society, *Proceedings*, October, 1914) are noteworthy additions to the literature of colonial history. Their value lies not alone in bringing to light an unfamiliar subject, but chiefly in revealing the significance and importance of a power and a point of view once commonly neglected. Over four hundred and fifty colonial enactments of nine continental colonies were disallowed by the exercise of the royal prerogative. It is remarkable that this vigorous check upon colonial self-direction, counted a serious matter by the colonists themselves, has been viewed by past writers as a subject to be ignored. Professor Andrews discusses the subject in general, while Dr. Russell's study is more ambitious, analyzing the matter in a wealth of detail, well organized and well documented. Both writers from deliberate choice approach the subject from only one angle, that of the British authorities. The disallowing power was fully justified in point of law and necessity and it was used consistently to maintain the law and custom of the British constitution and the interests and welfare of the British empire. The home authorities in general did not act in an arbitrary manner in reviewing colonial laws, frequently showing an attitude of forbearance, and in many instances the check was wholesome for the colonies, saving them from the difficulties of ill-advised and harmful legislation.

The efficiency of the royal check was often weakened by the difficulties of distance and communication and by the delay, indifference, and ignorance of officials. Its influence and effectiveness are questions which cannot be determined by simply assuming the central-office point of view. The whole history of the colonies is replete with evasions and disobedience of British control and it would be folly to draw any conclusions as to the success of the royal disallowance until the matter has